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13 January 1983

DDI TALKING POINTS

Suriname: Recent Developments

[redacted] Deputy Army Commander Horb resigned from the military last week, formalizing his nonparticipation in military activities over recent weeks. Although his resignation will acknowledge publicly the rift between him and Army Commander Bouterse, it is unlikely to alter military alignments significantly. A majority in the military oppose Bouterse's policies already but are unwilling to provoke a confrontation. Moreover, [redacted]

[redacted] Horb lamented recently that the military had lost all vestiges of its esprit de corps, and he estimated that some 70% of the troops would scatter at the first sign of an attempted attack on the military. [redacted]

Bouterse, in an effort to eliminate malcontents and consolidate his control over the military, purged the officer corps this week. On Monday he "fired" twelve officers, including six company commanders. The dismissals were followed by the resignations of eleven more officers yesterday. Most of the officers objected to Bouterse's execution of civilian leaders in

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December and had offered to resign earlier but were refused. In had recent weeks they reportedly had complained that Bouterse stripped the military of its weaponry--securing most of the equipment at his command center at Fort Zeelandia. This account indicates that the disaffected elements of the military would be ill-prepared to attempt a coup even if they had the will to do so. [REDACTED]

Bouterse will probably turn to the Group of 16--his cadre of loyal military supporters--to fill in key positions and promote loyal noncommissioned officers to company commanders. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the military is continuing to accept a normal level of recruits; some 200 are expected to enter on duty at the end of the month. Bouterse is likely to expand the People's Militia--his paramilitary security force--and rely heavily upon them until he can rebuild his support within the military. [REDACTED]

There has been no change in our assessment of the security situation as it effects US citizens. The regime has provided twenty-four hour civilian police protection at the US Ambassador's Residence and dusk-to-dawn protection at the Chancery. It is possible that Bouterse will reorganize the civilian police in the wake of his military reorganization--the civilian police have never given Bouterse their full support. Such a reorganization could affect the forces now protecting the

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US Embassy. [redacted]

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[redacted] reports that some seven Cuban officials have arrived in Paramaribo since early December, however, we still have no confirmation of the rumors of a Cuban troop presence. We believe that such rumors are unfounded. [redacted] have reported that a close relationship has developed between Bouterse and the Cuban Ambassador. It is our assessment that the Cubans advised Bouterse to deal strongly with his opponents but were somewhat surprised by his extreme actions. The support he reportedly has received from Havana thus far appears to be largely advisory. We are not aware of any shipments of military weaponry or equipment. [redacted]

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